Selected Story.

ONE OF THE "MAGNET" STAFF.

"Send Mr. Harding in."

The managing editor irritably dropped the speaking-tube, and exclaimed, half to himself:

"Why in the world couldn't those bothersome Cresson operatives have taken some other time to air their grievances?"

The managing editor did not mean to be unreasonable, but he did wish that the employees of the great Cresson cotton mills had not chosen for their strike a time when every news field was overcrowding the paper, and when an unusually active political campaign was beginning.

Millions of dollars were invested in the Cresson manufactories, and the mills had been compelled to shut down in a day. Hard as the situation was for the mill owners, the managing editor felt that it was harder still for the newspaper to be compelled to send away one of its best men just at this time.

He drew his hand wearily across his forehead with the gesture of a man whose brain is overworked.

At this moment an alert and very active young man, scarcely more than a boy, clear-eyed and frank in appearance, looked in at the door.

"Come in, Mr. Harding. I shall have to send you on special work. Those everlasting spinners and weavers at Cresson have struck. I want you to reach the ground by the first train tomorrow morning. You know upon such a matter it won't do for the Magnet to be beaten, and I needn't tell you that the Magnet wants the whole truth about it. That's one reason why I send you."

"Thank you, sir. I shall be glad to go."

"I'll put some one else on that matter of Colonel Benson's candidacy in the tenth district. And, Harding—"

"Yes"?

"Return tomorrow night if you can. If you cannot, stay over; see it through if it takes a month."

Harding was full of enthusiasm in his work. He exulted boyishly in the important assignment thus committed to him, for he knew that a good performance of such a duty would contribute to his advancement.

When the Daily Magnet's special correspondent alighted from the morning express in the city of Cresson the looms and spindles were idle; the mill yards were deserted save by the policeman detailed to guard the property there; agents and officials were in close consultation in the offices and counting rooms; angry and discontented operatives were gathered around the street corners.

All that day Harding went from place to place, winning the confidence of the mill managers by his frank and gentlemanly bearing, and that of the leaders of the strike by his evident fairness and desire to get the exact truth.

He found that he could return on the evening express; and when he took the train at quarter past seven, his report of the matter was already nearly completed.

Under the dim car-lights he scribbled on industriously, sure of a triumph. The other newspapers, he had found, were depending upon inefficient local correspondents for their accounts of the matter.

The train rushed through the gathering darkness. The sparks swept back from the throbbing engine in golden showers, like the tail of a comet, and the cinders rattled noisily against the windows. Harding worked on, concentrating all his energy upon the making of a graphic account of the strike.

The lights of the town of Benton were shining, only two or three miles distant, along a straight level streteh of track just in advance, when the whistle sounded a wild, shrill note of alarm. Then came a shock, a crash, the splitting and shattering of timbers, the snapping of iron and steel, and above all other sounds the cries of human agony.

The express train with its burden of people, crushed, mangled, imprisoned, dead or dying, lay piled upon the track, a ghastly wreck in the summer night.

It was the old story. Some one had blundered, and the fruits of the blunder were reaped in human lives. The train had been carried by an improperly set switch upon a side track, and the express had been heaped, in fragments, upon a row of laden flat cars.

Tom Harding was stunned by a broken timber, but only for a moment. He aroused himself with a half dazed consciousness that he had work to do; and with the sudden awakening to the realities of the situation he became aware that his legs were so pinioned that he could not move, and that pains were darting through his body—unaccountable pains growing constantly more intense.

He moved slightly, and would have cried out, but that the piercing screams about him kept him still from very shame. His nervous grasp tightened on the note-book and pencil which he still held in his hand.

Men approached with lanterns. He called to them, and they came and relieved the pressure about his legs, waiting for him to climb out of the wreck.

"I don't know what's the matter," he said painfully, "but I'm hurt somewhere. I can't move alone. Will you help me?"

He was raised and laid at one side upon the ground wet with dew. A flask was held to his lips, and a swallow from it revived his strength.

"Where are we?' 'he said. "Is there a telegraph office near?"

One of the men, who had remained for a minute beside him to see what care he might need, answered:

"This is Benton near by."

"I must get a dispatch to the operator—quick. It is of the utmost importance."

"I'd make it short. He'll be busy enough to night. Here!" the man called to a boy from a neighboring farm house. "My boy, you can make yourself useful. Here's a man who's been hurt, and wants to send a telegram. There'll be other errands you can do in town. The men are all needed here."

The boy, his face white and his eyes big with horror at the scenes around him, came and stood by Tom, who had written the directions with difficulty, and was tearing the leaves from his note book. Handing them to the boy he said:

"Tell the operator to send all he can of this before half-past two o'clock sure." Then he added, "Wait," and wrote hurriedly;

"The south-bound express, leaving Cresson at a quarter-past seven, struck a freight train just north of Benton this evening at nine o'clock, and was completely wrecked."

A physician approached and stopped to look at Harding.

"Are you badly hurt?" he asked.

"I don't seem to be hurt externally," but sharp pains keep shooting through my body, and I can't move."

The physician, grave and compassionate, knelt, and with skilful touch examined the young man. He asked a few questions, and shook his head sadly. The eager, brave young face, drawn with pain, interested and touched him.

Meanwhile Tom had made a few rapid inquiries of the doctor about the disaster, jotting them down to fill his dispatch. He thensaid quietly. ly:

"How is it with me, doctor?"

"Can you bear the truth?" asked the physician.

"Do you mean that I am going? Yes, I can bear it. How soon?"

"Very soon, I fear."

"Doctor, my name is Harding—Thomas Harding. I am a reporter for the Daily Magnet. I was on my way to the city with an account of the labor troubles at Cresson. It must be in the Magnet office before half-past two. Here I scribbled a story of this accident. You've given me nearly everything but the names of the dead and wounded—I can't get those. Doctor, will you see that my paper has those names? Can I trouble you so much? I can't fail my paper now."

Dr. May knew that he had a night of anxious work before him, but he could not refuse the pleading look in the boy's white face. The request, conveyed in these words, wrung out of suffering, appearing so singular and extraordinary and spoken rapidly, as by one whose life was short and whose work was very important, moved him greatly.

"Yes", said the physician, "I will see that it is done."

"Oh, thank you, doctor!" Harding's voice had almost a ring of triumph in it. "Your name is—"

"May"

Tom added a few lines to his dispatch.

"Can't get list of killed and wounded. Doctor May will send it. This is my last dispatch. Tell mother. Good-by—HARDING."

As the boy took the finished dispatch, Harding said:

"Tell the operator I have left money with Doctor May to pay for rushing this through. The Magnet will give anything for these stories."

The doctor added a word to the boy, and hurried him off through the darkness.

"Doctor, you will find in my pocketbook money enough to meet all my expenses. Take it and pay what should be paid. Never mind about me. Others need you more. I couldn't do anything else just now—I might as well do the best—I could—for my paper."

Harding's voice had sunk almost to a whisper, and he caught his breath painfully. Then his breath faltered, and died away altogether.

The work of caring for the wounded and dying went on around Tom's body, now left alone.

It was two o'clock in the morning in the office of the Magnet. The roll of the ponderous trucks overhead told that the first forms were being rushed down to the stereotyping room.

The telegraph editor laid aside the last tiresome sheet of type-written tissue paper, and looking through the window between his own and the telegraph room, asked if nothing had been heard from Cresson—a question he had asked several times in the last hour.

The managing editor came in with a worried look on his face.

"Nothing from Cresson?" he said. "What can be the matter with Harding? If he were not coming back tonight he would have wired long ago; and if he were coming, he would have been here before now."

Just then the night city editor brought word that the "night local man" on his round had learned at the Brainerd & Cresson station of a bad accident to the express due just before midnight.

"Send down at once for particulars," said the managing editor.

"I have sent," replied the night city editor.

"Hold the wire open till the last minute," was the managing editor's next order. "Harding will be heard from yet."

Just then came the call on the telegraph instrument. The operator answered and, began to write. The managing editor leaned eagerly over his shoulder.

Dated at Benton? What did it mean? It appeared to be Harding's account of the Cresson strike.

Page after page came rapidly from under the operator's hand. The story was vivid, graphic and complete.

The three editors read it rapidly, sent it sheet by sheet to the composing room. At last the signature was reached.

"It will be a beat!" exclaimed the managing editor.

"Probably Tom was stopped by the accident, and had to send his story from Benton," suggested the city editor.

"But the click of the instrument had begun again.

"BENTON, July 14.—The southward bound express, leaving Cresson at a quarter-past seven, struck a freight train just north of Benton and was completely wrecked this evening at nine o'clock."

Then followed the brief but vivid story of the accident, read eagerly and anxiously by the strong men who stood around the operator.

"Another beat!" exclaimed the telegraph editor—and then stopped, for the last page was reached.

The operator had grown white, and his hand twitched nervously as he laid down his pen and touched the key. The managing editor was the first to read the sheet, with the ink still wet on the brave words.

"Can't get list killed and wounded. Doctor May will send it. This is my last dispatch. Tell mother. Good-bye.—HARDING."

The managing editor dropped the sheet and turned away.

The Magnet that morning contained two special dispatches which attracted extraordinary attention. Contrary to the usual custom of the paper, both of these bore signatures, and in each case the name signed was that of Thomas Harding.

Above the telegram telling the story of the disaster, first in the death-roll that was anxiously scanned by so many eyes, stood the name of Thomas Harding, reporter.

That was all; but the world soon learned the story.—[E. A. Start in Youth's Companion.

ALL SORTS.

This Time of the Year.

Purify your blood. If the stomach, Bowels, Liver and Kidneys perform properly their functions the blood must be pure and rich. Mrs. Annie Barton, Catskill, N. Y., says Dr. David Kennedy's Favorite Remedy is the best medicine known for purifying the blood, for it cured my husband of running Ulcers of the leg when skilled physicians failed to do him any good.

Mme. Patti visited the White House recently, merely to inspect that mansion, and upon her own invitation. She wrote to the president requesting the privilege. A big handful of choice flowers from the White House conservatories was offered her as a souvenir.

CURE FOR CROUP.—Use Dr. Thomas' Eclectic Oil according to directions. It is the best remedy for all sudden attacks of colds, pain and inflammation, and injuries.

Reports from the state of Georgia indicate that the watermelon acreage this year is about 10,000. At the usual average the total product will be about 9000 car loads.

Dr. Wood's Norway Pine Syrup was used for years as a prescription by a successful physician. It is in all respects the best cough medicine made to-day. Sold by all dealers on a guarantee of satisfaction.

The stockmen of South Dakota have recently imported from Tennesee a number of Russian wolf hounds to help in the extermination of wolves, which have of late been killing numbers of calves and colts.

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